

THE FRENCH ADMINISTRATION OF INDO-CHINA

and no knowledge of French law, it was no less true that the new magistrates with a better legal equipment knew nothing about the country, and, what was worse, made no effort to learn. The evils engendered by their mutual jealousy were aggravated by the premature retirement of Le Myre. After him there were many modifications in personnel and legislation, but always along the line of increased assimilation. As they worked out, Le Myre's reforms proved to be too hastily applied and, above all, too theoretically conceived. The judicial reform was his most important contribution, though Le Myre regarded it only as the corollary of his administrative changes. In an over-zealous moment he suppressed the *College des Stagiaires*, so as to create a carefully regulated bureaucracy, but the salary inducements were not great enough to lure able men from France, nor were the K[^]I premiums sufficient to stimulate functionaries already in the country to learn such a difficult language as Annamite. Economically the French were making little impression on the country. In conquering Cochin-China they had simply acquired one of the world rice reservoirs, already well organized by the Chinese. Without planning and without effort, revenues poured into the treasury, but the populace remained as miserable as before. Le Myre tried to lighten the tax burden, to strengthen small property owners so as to decrease the growing proletariat, and also to protect the peasant against the ravaging Notables. Although the French facilitated the growth of these Notables' fortunes, by permitting the free exportation of rice, nevertheless their simultaneous reform of *corvees* deprived this mass of free labour. Their irritation naturally took itself

out on the
 easants, who no longer had even mandarinal
 protection, for the
 rench administrators were inaccessible and ignorant
 of local affairs.
 y a fairer division of the taxes, by a prolonged peace,
 and by improve-
 tents through public works, the population increased
 rapidly and a
 m fortunes grew apace. The drawbacks to Le Myre's
 work were: the
 unnecessary multiplication of officials, which drained
 the budget; a
 alky of assimilation, which meant the dissolution of the
 Aimamites'
 >mmunal and family Hfe; the regime of the
 interpreter through the
 Dplication of inappropriate legislation; the diffusion of
 garbled French
 | a few Annamites in the place of widespread
 Confucianist education;
 i expensive native army to replace an economical
 militia; and some
 LperficieJ administrative changes designed solely to
 check a military
igme, and which only transferred to the French
 electorate ever
raster powers for them to abuse. It has become the
 fashion to blame